

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling a communications system,
comprising:

5 providing a list of one or more action signal
icons, each action signal icon corresponding to an
action signal that may be provided;

selecting at least one of the action signal icons
to indicate a selected action signal; and

10 associating the trigger signal with the selected
action signal.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications
system is an intercom system.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications
system includes a user communication device capable of
providing a trigger signal.

20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications
system is an intercom station.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications
system is a paging system.

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6. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications system is telephone system.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications
5 system is a conference system.

8. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications system is a media retrieval system.

10 9. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications system is a time tracking system.

10. The method of claim 3, wherein the communications system is an event tracking system.

15 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the list of one or more action signal icons is provided via a monitor.

20 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the list of one or more action signal icons is provided using a graphical user interface.

25 13. The method of claim 11, wherein selecting at least one of the action signal icons includes moving an identifying icon displayed on the monitor until the

identifying icon coincides with one of the action signal icons.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein associating the
5 trigger signal with the selected action signal includes
instructing the controller to provide the selected
action signal if the trigger signal is provided.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein one of the action
10 signals is a serial message.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the trigger signal
is a serial message.

15 17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing the trigger signal; and
providing the selected action signal.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:
20 identifying a device portion associated with the
provided trigger signal;
formatting the selected action signal to include
the device portion of the provided trigger signal.

25 19. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

determining whether the provided trigger signal includes a place/end string;

determining whether a line of communication is open;

5 if it was determined that the provided trigger signal includes a place/end string and a line of communication is open, closing the line of communication.

10 20. The method of claim 17, further comprising:
determining whether the provided trigger signal includes the place/end string and a device portion;

if it was determined the provided trigger signal includes the place/end string, opening a line of
15 communication to a device corresponding to the device portion.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the trigger signal is provided by the user communication device.

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22. The method of claim 17, wherein the action signal is provided to a programmable logic controller.

23. A method of controlling a communications system,
the communications system having a controller capable of
providing an action signal, the method comprising:

5 providing a list of one or more trigger signal
icons, each trigger signal icon corresponding to a
trigger signal that may be provided;

selecting at least one of the trigger signal icons
to indicate a selected trigger signal; and

10 associating the action signal with the selected
trigger signal.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications
system is an intercom system.

15 25. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications
system is a paging system.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications
system is telephone system.

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27. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications
system is a conference system.

28. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications
25 system is a media retrieval system.

29. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications system is a time tracking system.

30. The method of claim 23, wherein the communications
5 system is an event tracking system.

31. The method of claim 23, wherein the controller is a computer.

10 32. The method of claim 23, wherein the list of one or more trigger signal icons is provided via a monitor.

15 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the list of one or more trigger signal icons is provided using a graphical user interface.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein selecting at least one of the trigger signal icons includes moving an identifying icon displayed on the monitor until the
20 identifying icon coincides with one of the trigger signal icons.

35. The method of claim 23, wherein associating the action signal with the selected trigger signal includes

instructing the controller to provide the action signal if the selected trigger signal is provided.

36. The method of claim 23, wherein one of the trigger
5 signals is a serial message.

37. The method of claim 23, wherein the action signal
is a serial message.

10 38. The method of claim 23, further comprising:
 providing the selected trigger signal; and
 providing the action signal.

15 39. The method of claim 38, further comprising:
 identifying a device portion of the provided
trigger signal;
 formatting the selected action signal to include
the device portion of the provided trigger signal.

20 40. The method of claim 38, further comprising:
 determining whether the provided trigger signal
includes a place/end string;
 determining whether a line of communication is
open;

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if it was determined that the provided trigger signal includes the place/end string and a line of communication is open, closing the line of communication.

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41. The method of claim 38, further comprising:
determining whether the provided trigger signal includes the place/end string and a device portion;

10 includes the place/end string, opening a line of communication to a device corresponding to the device portion.

42. The method of claim 38, wherein the trigger signal
15 is provided by a user communication device.

43. The method of claim 38, wherein the action signal is provided to a programmable logic controller.

20 44. An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code instructions embodied therein to cause a computer to associate a trigger signal with an action signal, the instructions having:

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a computer readable program code module to provide a list of one or more action signal icons, each action signal icon corresponding to an action signal that may be provided;

5 a computer readable program code module to provide a list of one or more trigger signal icons, each trigger signal icon corresponding to a trigger signal that may be provided;

10 a computer readable program code module to receive a selection of one of the action signal icons;

a computer readable program code module to receive a selection of one of the trigger signal icons;

15 a computer readable program code module to associate the action signal corresponding to the selection of one of the action signal icons with a trigger signal corresponding to the selection of one of the action signal icons.

45. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
20 list of one or more action signal icons includes action signal icons corresponding to action signals for an intercom system.

46. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
25 list of one or more action signal icons includes action

signal icons corresponding to action signals for an
paging system.

47. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
5 list of one or more action signal icons includes action
signal icons corresponding to action signals for a
telephone system.

48. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
10 list of one or more action signal icons includes action
signal icons corresponding to action signals for a
conference system.

49. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
15 list of one or more action signal icons includes action
signal icons corresponding to action signals for a media
retrieval system.

50. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
20 list of one or more action signal icons includes action
signal icons corresponding to action signals for a time
tracking system.

51. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
25 list of one or more action signal icons includes action

signal icons corresponding to action signals for an event tracking system.

52. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
5 list of one or more trigger signal icons includes
trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for an intercom system.

53. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
10 list of one or more trigger signal icons includes
trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for an paging system.

54. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
15 list of one or more trigger signal icons includes
trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for a telephone system.

55. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
20 list of one or more trigger signal icons includes
trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for a conference system.

56. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
25 list of one or more trigger signal icons includes

trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for a media retrieval system.

57. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
list of one or more trigger signal icons includes
trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for a time tracking system.

58. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
list of one or more trigger signal icons includes
trigger signal icons corresponding to trigger signals
for an event tracking system.

59. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
code module to provide a list of one or more action
signal icons is capable of providing the list of one or
more action signal icons to a monitor.

60. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the
code module to provide a list of one or more action
signal icons includes a graphical user interface.

61. The article of manufacture of claim 60, wherein the
graphical user interface is capable of allowing an
individual to move an identifying icon displayed on a

monitor to make the identifying icon coincide with one of the action signal icons.

62. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
5 code module to provide a list of one or more trigger
signal icons is capable of providing the list of one or
more trigger signal icons to a monitor.

63. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
10 code module to provide a list of one or more trigger
signal icons includes a graphical user interface.

64. The article of manufacture of claim 63, wherein the
graphical user interface is capable of allowing an
15 individual to move an identifying icon displayed on a
monitor to make the identifying icon coincide with one
of the trigger signal icons.

65. The article of manufacture of claim 44, wherein the
20 code module to associate the action signal with the
trigger signal includes instructions capable of causing
a signal provider to provide an action signal
corresponding to the selection of one of the action
signal icons if the associated trigger signal is
25 provided.

66. The article of manufacture of claim 44, further comprising a computer readable program code module to identify a device portion of the associated trigger signal, when the associated trigger signal is provided, 5 and format the associated action signal to include the device portion.

67. The article of manufacture of claim 44, further comprising:

10 a computer readable program code module to determine whether a received trigger signal includes a place/end string;

 a computer readable program code module to determine whether a line of communication is open; and

15 a computer readable program code module, to close the line of communication, if it was determined a line of communication is open and the received trigger signal includes a place/end string.

20 68. The article of manufacture of claim 44, further comprising:

 a computer readable program code module to determine whether the received trigger signal includes a place/end string and a device portion;

a computer readable program code module to open a line of communication to a device corresponding to the device portion, if the received trigger signal includes the place/end string.

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69. A communications system, comprising:

a user communication device capable of providing a trigger signal;

a communicating controller capable of responding to an action signal;

a master controller in communication with the communicating controller and the user communication device, the master controller being controlled by computer executable code for selectively associating the trigger signal with the action signal so that the action signal is provided to the communicating controller if the trigger signal is provided by the user communication device.

20 70. The system of claim 69, further comprising a monitor in communication with the master controller, the monitor being capable of displaying a trigger signal icon corresponding to the trigger signal, and capable of displaying an action signal icon corresponding to the action signal.

71. The system of claim 69, wherein the computer executable code includes a graphical user interface to facilitate selectively associating the trigger signal with the action signal.

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72. The system of claim 69, wherein the master controller is capable of identifying a device portion of a received trigger signal, and capable of formatting an action signal to include the device portion.

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73. The system of claim 69, wherein the master controller is capable of (a) determining whether a received trigger signal includes a place/end string, (b) determining whether a line of communication is open, and
15 (c) closing the line of communication if it is determined a line of communication is open and the received trigger signal includes a place/end string.

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74. The system of claim 69, wherein the master controller is capable of (a) determining whether the received trigger signal includes a place/end string and a device portion, and (b) opening a line of communication to a device corresponding to the device portion, if the received trigger signal includes the
25 place/end string.